

# ROCHESTER'S IMPENDING STORM WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is the first in a series about Rochester's new storm water management program. The six articles will address the following topics:*

- Part I – An Introduction to the New Permit Program*
- Part II – Reasons Behind the New Permit Program*
- Part III – Requirements of the New Permit*
- Part IV – How Will the New Program be Funded?*
- Part V – A Closer Look at the Construction Industry Requirements*
- Part VI – How Can You Help Protect Water Quality?*

## **Part I – An Introduction to the New Permit Program**

**Will I be affected? “I am a \_\_\_\_\_.”**

- ☞ Builder
- ☞ Developer
- ☞ Construction Contractor
- ☞ Utility Company
- ☞ Development Design Engineer or Architect
- ☞ Landscaper or Landscape Architect
- ☞ Rochester Property Owner (Business or Residential)

If you can fill in the blank above with any of the preceding nouns, the answer is yes!

In response to requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established “Phase II” regulations that will require public owners or operators of small “municipal separate storm sewer systems” (MS4s) to obtain permits in order to legally discharge storm water to our lakes and streams. This permit program, known as the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program, has been delegated to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). They are responsible for developing and enforcing the specific new provisions that will apply to small MS4s in Minnesota. MPCA's goal for the Phase II MS4 permit program is “to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of waters of the state through management and treatment of urban storm water runoff.”

EPA and MPCA have mandated that the City of Rochester, Olmsted County, and the four townships surrounding Rochester (Haverhill, Rochester, Marion, and Cascade) must obtain MS4 permits by March 10, 2003. These permits will include a “Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program” (SWPPP) that describes how each entity intends to manage storm water within Rochester's “Urbanized Area”. The Urbanized Area is the demographic boundary established by the U.S. Census Bureau that generally describes an urban area with a population of 50,000 people and a density of at least 1,000 per square mile. A map of the Rochester Urbanized Area can be seen on the following web site:

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/maps/sw-rochester.pdf>

The five-year SWPPPs will outline the activities and regulations that will need to be followed to insure that surface water quality and aquatic habitats do not deteriorate from the addition of storm water.

In the past, MPCA's NPDES program also required permits for construction sites disturbing five or more acres and for certain industrial activities. Those permit requirements will also change under the new Phase II Program. Certain industries that were previously exempt will now need Industrial NPDES permits. Additionally, Construction NPDES permits will now be required for sites disturbing one or more acres. For more information about the Phase II requirements for the Construction and Industrial permit programs, go to the following web site:

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/stormwater/index.html>

Next month's article will focus on how storm water affects water quality.

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***“Protecting water quality is everybody's business”***